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ABSTRACT

This report addresses reorganizing staff training efforts in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), North Carolina. Training includes both formal workshops and more informal growth opportunities for staff. Data sources for the report include surveys or focus groups from principals and central school district staff, a review of national standards for staff development, interviews and written feedback from four Educational Benchmark Network school systems and Howard County, Maryland, and cost analyses. Respondents believe that staff training would be more effective if all offerings were aligned with the system achievement goal and related critical success factors. Better planning and scheduling of training efforts were also recommended by respondents. In the WCPSS, no single office or department is in charge of coordinating training for administrators and other professionals. Recommendations are made for establishing a department to coordinate training offerings for all job groups. (SLD)

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Staff Development Review Summary

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Wake County Public School System
Department of Evaluation and Research
Office of Accountability
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STAFF DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SUMMARY ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

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This review explores whether WCPSS training efforts might be more efficient and effective if re-organized. Input was gathered from district administrators, and information was reviewed from similar school systems, national standards, and WCPSS cost data. The conclusion was that pulling key staff with training responsibilities together from several departments to create a new department could facilitate priority setting, efficiency, and effectiveness. The new department would coordinate training for all job groups, but it would not deliver all training.

BACKGROUND

This report addresses whether and how to reorganize our staff training efforts in WCPSS. It differs from some of our other "sunset" reviews, because no one is seriously considering eliminating or completely outsourcing our staff training programs.

In this report, training includes both formal workshops and more informal growth opportunities for staff. Currently, these opportunities are provided through many WCPSS departments. The critical issues are who should coordinate training and who should deliver it. Most staff members who provided input to this report believe that existing offices should be combined to coordinate the training for all or most employee groups, but that most of those who deliver training should remain in their content-specific departments (such as Curriculum and Instruction). Views are more disparate about appropriate reporting relationships for the new office or department.

Data sources used for this report included surveys or focus groups from Cabinet, principals, and central administrators; a review of the national standards for staff development; telephone interviews or written feedback from four Educational Benchmark Network school systems plus Howard County, Maryland; and cost analyses.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Concerns

Alignment: Respondents believe staff training would be more effective if all offerings were aligned with the system achievement goal and related critical success factors (67% agreed). While individual departments attempt to align their efforts with the school system's mission and achievement goal, no strategic plan has been developed across departments to identify training priorities for the system and appropriate departmental responsibilities.

Organization:

- Training is not *planned* or *scheduled* in a well coordinated way across departments (about half agree), which sometimes means multiple sessions (often on similar topics) are offered for the same job group within a short time period.
- Responsibilities are not all assigned to appropriate departments (e.g., Staff Development assigns mentor teachers to work with first and second year teachers, while Human Resources coordinates training for Initially Licensed Teachers).

Services:

- The timing of sessions often pulls teachers from their classes during instructional time or on days that were intended for school training.
- The number of offerings for all job groups could be improved, with the highest percentages of respondents reporting offerings as insufficient for: central and school support staff (100% and 76% respectively), central administrators (87%), and assistant principals (52%).
- Offerings have been limited by insufficient space in which to hold sessions (84%).

Strengths

Staff input suggests major strengths are that staff training offerings are:

- high in quality (77%) and linked with best practices,
- provided by high-quality staff,
- easy to sign up for and attend (72%) and to get renewal credit for (81%),
- aligned sufficiently with the system achievement goal and critical success factors to make a positive impact (although alignment could be improved), and
- valued and desired by staff.

Other Key Findings

Organization and Staffing: No single office or department is in charge of coordinating training for administrators and other professionals.

- Leadership Development (in Human Resources), Staff Development (in Instructional Services), and Organizational Development ("Quality", in Administrative Services) all have administrator training as part of their charge. However, responsibilities are not distinct, the three offices are part of three separate divisions, and coordination is difficult. All three offices are relatively small. (Staff Development has five administrators, while Administrative Leadership and Quality have one each.) In addition, other divisions also plan sessions for this group independently (e.g., area superintendents).
- The Instructional Services Division, especially Curriculum and Instruction (which includes the Staff Development office) provide the most offerings for teachers. However, Human Resources (HR) has two teachers who provide training for initially certified teachers, and other departments also plan and deliver training sessions for teachers and other professionals.
- HR covers tuition for relevant college courses for staff in *all* job groups, but funds generally are insufficient to cover all requests.

Human Resources is "in charge" of training for support staff, but has only minimal staffing (part of two administrators) to carry out the task. HR also covers the cost of job-related training for support staff (with prior approval) while funds last. Technology Services offers limited opportunities for software training for support staff through a consultant.

No strategic master plan is developed across departments defining priorities for training for various job groups. The result is that sessions are developed and delivered independently by staff in many different offices and departments, and are not sufficiently coordinated.

Central survey results indicate many departments offer sessions for the same job groups on related topics. Staff Development is the only department that can "approve" sessions for renewal credit, but all sessions do not seek this credit. Overall, nearly all central administrators and professionals who responded to E&R's survey indicated they were delivering at least *some* training sessions this year (only five were in the Staff Development office). In addition, half to three fourths of those not in the Staff Development office are handling some of the same tasks as that office, including publicizing their own workshops, handling registration, paying for substitutes, and processing continuing education credits. Based on estimates of staff administrator time spent on training, WCPSS devotes a *minimum* of 30.8 full time equivalent central staff to its training function (this includes administrative and professional time plus some clerical support but excludes the 17 administrators who did not respond to the survey).

Costs: *WCPSS devoted an estimated $7.4 million to staff training efforts in 1998-99.* This represents about 1.2% of the overall budget of $621,590,453. The target set through strategic planning in WCPSS is to devote about 2% of the budget to training and development experiences by 2003.

- WCPSS allocated over $5.4 million in federal, state, and local funds directly to staff training in 1998-99. Most of this amount ($5,055,216) was within staff development purpose codes (5930, 6930, and 7930). However, $354,697 was within instructional program codes (5210 and 6210) which covered staff development office staff (through state funds).
- In addition, WCPSS conservatively devoted an additional $2 million to training, based on estimates of central staff time spent on tasks associated with training. (*School* staff time is not reflected in this estimate.)

WCPSS allocated $4.4 million (87%) of the staff development purpose code funds to schools in 1998-99. Overall, 59% of the funds were spent during the fiscal year. One third (34%) of the remaining funds could be carried over (most was used for new schools); about 7% could not be carried over. As illustrated in Attachment 1, most ($335,109) funds that could not be carried over reverted to local funds.

Services: WCPSS has over 12,000 employees. Currently, central administrators are most likely to provide formal training to teachers. School level principals, assistant principals, and other school professionals come next. Central administrators are least likely to provide training for central staff, support staff, parents, or community members. Beyond formal training, WCPSS central administrators also offer some less formal opportunities for training, most commonly consultation and support about procedures and implementation of job duties. Providing planned opportunities for follow-up was also mentioned rather frequently, but *only* by C&I staff; this is a practice recommended by national standards (NSDC, 1995). Other "job-embedded" training practices recommended by national standards are used infrequently in WCPSS, including buddy training and study or user groups.

The Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) Department provides far more training than other departments, with 905 sessions and over 5,500 hours of formal training for staff in 1999-2000. Reading or math instruction, technology for instruction, and instruction for other subjects are the three most prominent training topics offered with respect to number of hours of training. Training for reading and math instruction impacts the greatest number of individuals. C&I staff

also address all of the other topics addressed in our survey; technology for other purposes (non-instruction), interpersonal skills, job specific skills, and school or system improvement.

Outside of C&I, training focused primarily on school system improvement, job-specific skills, and technology for non-instruction. The greatest number of individuals trained occurred in the topic of job-specific skills. The main topic areas of overlap between C&I and non-C&I training were instruction for subjects other than reading or math and technology for purposes other than instruction. The Human Resources Department provides some training related to instruction to newly certified teachers, and Technology Services provides or arranges for some general technology training for teachers and support staff. (See Attachment 2.)

Comparisons to Other Districts: WCPSS was similar to the other districts in:

- increasing the focus of their training efforts on district goals,
- offering more sessions for teachers than for other job groups,
- using primarily district staff from several departments to deliver training,
- evaluating offerings primarily when first offered (and in hoping to study the long-term impact of these offerings), and
- providing regional staff development contacts for schools.

WCPSS was different from the other systems in that:

- Our catalog is issued only once a year and seems less comprehensive than other systems.
- We offer far fewer sessions during the summer and far more during the school year.
- Coordination of training for job groups is less centralized in one department.

In discussing staff training efforts in other school districts, we found a variety of organizational structures. Those that had more centralized departments reported fewer problems in coordinating offerings. Some systems could provide valuable suggestions to WCPSS as we try to reorganize, improve alignment, increase support staff offerings, and use technology for registration, and evaluate our efforts. (See Attachment 3.)

National Standards: When compared to the national standards for staff development, WCPSS appears to be in the mid-range of implementation (NSDC, 1995). WCPSS seems most exemplary in terms of fostering a norm of continuous improvement, basing training on knowledge of human development, and utilizing best instructional practices based on proven practice and research in their training. The most improvement is needed in evaluating the success of our training efforts and facilitating family support for improving student performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ***New Department:*** Based on staff input (see Attachment 4), quality principles, national standards, and information on other Educational Benchmark systems, **our basic recommendation is that leadership and coordination for training of all staff groups are consolidated in a new department with a new name.** This consolidation could address many staff concerns. Possible functions and staffing to be included in this new department are listed below. All of these ideas could facilitate accomplishment of the Board goal and improve overall system quality. Those that seem most critical are marked for Year 1 implementation.

Functions: Create a new department to coordinate training offerings for all job groups (administrators, professionals, and support staff) (Year 1). Staff would deliver *some key* training but most sessions would continue to be delivered by *specialists in other departments.*

Coordination functions could include:

- developing a strategic, comprehensive annual plan for staff development, organized around accomplishment of the school system achievement goal and mission, and based on collaborative input from all departments;
- reviewing the level of training offered for various job groups and preparing a plan for addressing insufficiencies (support staff appears to be the biggest need to address first);
- delivering training in some key areas, with other training delivered by specialists in other departments as appropriate and clearly specified in the annual staff development plan;
- assigning mentor teachers and providing training for initially certified teachers;
- compiling and adequately disseminating comprehensive master listings of offerings for all job groups, updating them throughout the year;
- exploring and developing alternative times and methods of delivering staff training to minimize the need for school staff to attend training on instructional days, including expanded summer offerings, week-end or evening offerings, on-line offerings, independent study opportunities, centrally protected work days, and video-supported training modules;
- scheduling sessions, registration (except in unusual circumstances), assigning rooms;
- granting and maintaining records of renewal credits;
- paying for or reimbursing expenses associated with authorized training for teachers and support staff provided outside of WCPSS;
- refining present web site and database systems to facilitate access to offerings and registration and streamline the approval process; and
- developing reasonable ways to expand opportunities for follow-up on initial training and to evaluate the long-term impact of training.

Staffing: Department staff could include:

- a new Cabinet level department head (Year 1), with three directors in charge of training efforts for the three major job groups (administrators, professionals, and support staff). Training intended for more than one group could be jointly planned.
- all staff currently responsible for quality, leadership development, and staff development (Year 1).
- staff currently in Human Resources who train initially licensed teachers and support staff (Year 1). However, a shift in responsibility for assigning student teachers from Staff Development to Human Resources should also be considered since these teachers are often excellent recruits. The resources currently used for this process in SD should also shift to Human Resources.
- *Consider:* Technology Services (TS) basic technology training staff. Staff strongly supports having all basic technology training (e.g., Microsoft Office and Windows) in one department. This could be accomplished by moving TS staff to this new department or by consolidating this function (in TS or C&I). Currently, TS and C&I (through Staff Development and Technology Connections primarily) provide most basic technology training. Key goals would be a seamless contact for accessing basic computer training, building sufficient capacity to meet training needs (through in-house or outside vendors),

and expanding offerings focused on common applications of software (e.g., producing school newsletters, analyzing program effectiveness, and preparing a presentation).

- additional staffing should be considered only after an assessment of status and needs. A retreat of Cabinet and other key staff could be used to set training priorities based on the system achievement goal and strategies. It may be that fewer sessions would be offered with full coverage of appropriate staff or that some additional staff would be added at that point (from other departments or as new positions).

2. ***Funding:*** Monitoring central allocations for staff training will be easier if all staff who become part of the new staff development office/department are assigned the same department code. To cover any needed new expenditures for staff development, WCPSS should first review whether staff development funds which have been carried over were fully utilized and whether any funds that reverted to the local budget are available. Some funds may be needed to:

- fund some additional staff (after existing staff functions are reviewed),
- develop new software or refine existing software to automate registration and renewal credit operations, and
- pay teachers to attend expanded summer or non-school day offerings. However, additional funds needed could be reduced if teachers are offered *either* renewal credits *or* stipends for attending optional staff development (as is done in some other districts).

3. ***Technology:*** The Internet, e-mail, and other technological advances open a window of opportunity for training that WCPSS should more fully utilize. Staff development already has offerings listed at the WCPSS intranet site, but this site could be refined to approve and update offerings on a continuous basis, highlight upcoming workshops, register participants, monitor attendance, and keep track of renewal credits. It may be helpful to contact Gwinnett County, Georgia in this regard since their catalog, registration, attendance, and renewal credits are all on-line. Their staff database is accessible at the training web site so that teachers' credits earned are automatically logged when workshops are completed. Workshop sponsors can also monitor the number of staff who have signed up, cancellations, and waiting lists.

The web can also be used more extensively to offer distance learning or independent study opportunities, as well as opportunities for follow up on initial training and evaluation of the long-term impact of training.

4. ***Communication:*** Communication might be facilitated by:

- housing as many critical staff development personnel as possible in the new staff development center.
- providing as many training sessions as feasible in the new center, with some regional training as appropriate.
- prominently posting information on sessions occurring that week at each site that offers training rooms.
- notifying school staff about work days that central staff plan to protect as early as possible (to facilitate school level planning), and
- providing a truly comprehensive listing of training offered by all departments, with much more frequent updates. The intranet web site should be used to facilitate this. (All school staff should now have access to the Intranet in the media center or computer lab.)

Paper catalogs may become more abbreviated, but should be distributed to all appropriate staff with information on how to access the intranet site. Fall catalogs should be provided even earlier than in the past, especially to year-round schools that have early start dates. Ways to highlight upcoming or new sessions should be considered, including updated catalogs each semester and/or fliers each month.

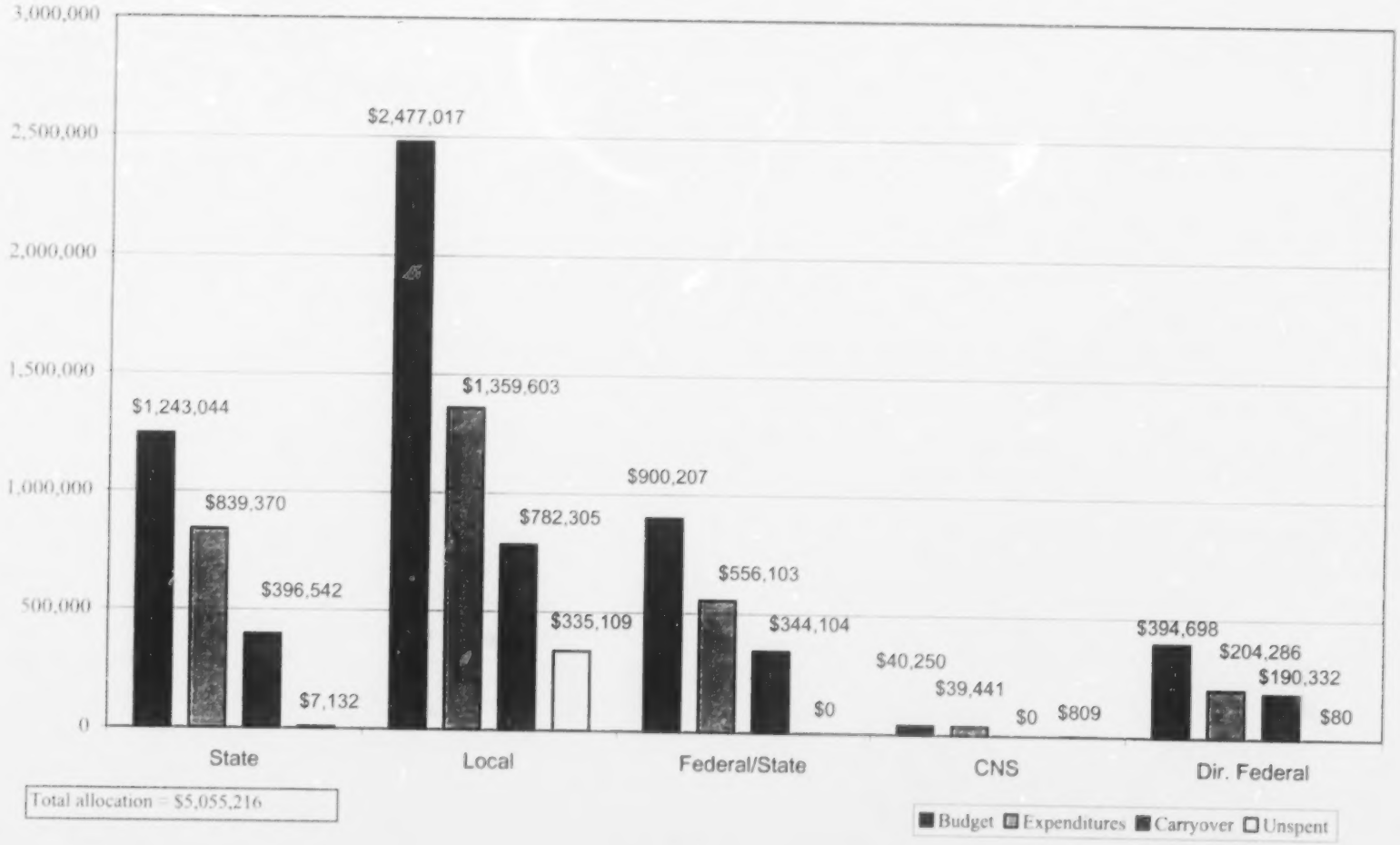
*5. **Evaluation***: A plan for evaluating the effectiveness of training efforts in accomplishing their objectives place should be designed and implemented systematically. Of the school systems contacted, Howard County, Maryland had the most comprehensive efforts in this area, including evaluation of initial satisfaction and learning, application of learning once participants returned to their work, and overall long-term results in meeting the intended purpose and objectives of the training. Gusky (2000) also addresses this topic extensively.

References

Guskey, Thomas R. (2000). Evaluating professional development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

National Staff Development Council. (1995). Standards for staff development: Middle level edition (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH.

Attachment 1: Staff Development Funds Budgeted, Expended, and Unspent by Fund
1998-1999



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Attachment 2: Formal Training Offered in 1999-2000 Overall and by C&I and Non-C&I Staff

	C&I N= 35			Non C&I N=27		
Area	**Times Offered Ranking**	**Hours Offered Ranking**	**Trained Indiv. Ranking**	**Times Offered Ranking**	**Hours Offered Ranking**	**Trained Indiv. Ranking**
Instruction: Reading or Math	1st	1st	1st	5th	6th	6th
Instruction: Other subjects	4th	3rd	4th	2nd	4th	2nd
Technology for instruction	2nd	2nd	5th	7th	7th	7th
Technology for other purposes	3rd	4th	3rd	1st	1st	3rd
Interpersonal skills	7th	7th	6th	3rd	5th	5th
Job specific skills	6th	6th	7th	5th	3rd	1st
School or system improvement	5th	5th	2nd	4th	2nd	4th

Response Rate: 62 of 79 central directors and direct reports responded to the survey (78%). Each division was represented, but some staff in areas outside Curriculum and Instruction did not respond.

Attachment 3: Educational Benchmark Network (EBN) School Districts: Staff Training Organization and Goals

Responsible Dept(s)./ Professional Staff	Job Groups	Responsibilities	Goals
WCPSS (about 94,850 students; 12,055 employees/6,442teachers)			
1. Curriculum and Instruction (C&I): Office of Staff Development (5 adms.) plus subject area specialists. 2. Human Resources: -Leadership Development Office (1 adm.) -Support staff (parts of 2 adms.) -Initially Licensed Teachers (part of 1 adm. + 2 teacher trainers) -(general responsibility) 3. Administrative Services: Organizational Development (Quality Training) 4. Area Assistants (general responsibility) Technology Services	1. C&I: Adms.* and professionals (mostly school) 2. HR: -Adms (mostly school) -support -initially licensed teachers -new employee orientation 3. Selected central and school staff 4. School adms. needs plus School Improvement Conference 5. Support and professionals	1. Review/approve offerings, develop annual catalog for administrators and teachers, assign some rooms, review rosters of credit renewal collected at session, deliver central thematic training (C&I content specialists deliver many sessions), collect and summarize evaluations. Place and support student teachers and mentor teachers (for first and second year teachers). Provide some training. 2. Set priorities, arrange for or deliver sessions, evaluate. 3. Same as #2 4. Same as #2 5. Same as #2 with focus on basic technology training.	Each dept. determines offerings. Effort has been made to relate more closely with system goal in past year, but there has been no systematic review of all offerings to set priorities. Sessions submitted to Staff Development Office are required to indicate how sessions relate to system goal and strategies.
Gwinnett County Ga. (about 104,000 students; about 7,000 teachers/certified + 4,217 classified staff)			
Professional Development Dept. coordinates for most job groups. Support coordinator to be added 2000/2001.	In charge of teachers and adms. (schools and central). Not in charge of support, but offer some sessions.	Set priorities for the year (with Cabinet) and review/approve offerings. Develop catalog quarterly for all groups. Deliver some training, but mainly coordinate sessions delivered by staff in other depts. Evaluate session effectiveness.	Staff development priorities are aligned with system mission and goals and curriculum. Professional Development Dept. works with Superintendents Cabinet to determine priorities each year. Then offerings are determined.
Anne Arundel County, MD (about 74,000 students; about 4,100 teachers)			
1. Staff Development office (part of HR) includes a director and 10 teacher trainers. Six trainers work with specific regions; 4 have districtwide responsibilities; all help on some efforts. 2. The Curriculum Dept. has 6 SD resource teachers who work with teams for each region of district. They plan sessions independently of SD once goals are defined. They deliver instructional training.	1. Plans sessions for adms., teachers, other professionals, clerical, other support staff. 2. Plans sessions for adms. and teachers—primarily at school level.	1. Staff Development office: Plan offerings with input and priorities set by district leaders except for instruction. Produce catalog 3 times a year of all sessions for all job groups. Deliver some training (e.g., support sessions, multi-cultural). Handles registration (automated phone line). Evaluate workshops. 2. Plan and deliver sessions related to curriculum and instruction issues and evaluate.	Directors along with assistant superintendents meet annually to determine priorities. SD and Curriculum trainers plan specific sessions separately.

Attachment 3: (EBN Continued)

Responsible Dept(s)./ Professional Staff	Job Groups	Responsibilities	Goals
Fairfax County, VA (about 152,000 students, 17,000 staff; 234 schools)			
Office of Staff Development and Training includes 12 staff. Different depts. are also in charge of some training.	Coordinates training for all job groups. Provides more for clerical and central office adms. than WCPSS.	Support and leadership for training of all employees. Orientation, instruction, mentoring, teacher exchanges, annual recognition's. Web site lists specific training initiatives (www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OSDT/index.htm).	Training offered is based on needs of participants and the school system. Training is a priority and occurs in all departments.
Duval County, FL. (127,000 students; over 7,000 teachers)			
1. Office of Instructional Staff Development—2.5 Adms. and 8 teachers on loan. 2. Some depts. coordinate specific areas of training.	1. In charge of school adms., teachers, paraprofessionals, and clerical (technology). Also central adms. somewhat. 2. Technology, media, guidance professionals.	Develop and deliver training. With adms., focus is on new and existing principals and aspiring principals. Emphasis on new teachers and teachers identified as needing assistance with some offerings for all. Develop catalog each semester of offerings for teachers and adms. Some privatizing of training planned for region (18 school districts); state initiative.	All department heads meet to review district goals and decide on training priorities. Then SD & other depts. decide on specific training offerings. Have dropped some sessions along the way to align with goals and because of reduced staffing.
Virginia Beach, VA (75,000 students)			
Organizational Development—5 professionals	One dept. coordinates for all job groups: adms., teachers, professionals, clerical, support staff.	Develop plan for staff development. Deliver some of the training. Produce catalogs. Handle registration.	Develop plan based on needs of system and with input from departments. In catalogs, sessions are listed under each goal.
Howard County, Maryland (30,000 students)			
Office of Staff Development: 1 coordinator, 6 facilitators, 1 manager of materials development center	Coordinates for all job groups; delivers some.	Facilitators are teachers on loan for 2-3 years. They work with each dept. to determine needs, plan sessions, determine objectives, and evaluate. Facilitators deliver some sessions, but also train dept. staff how to be presenters. Produce catalog three times a year. Handle registration.	Strategic plan developed in 1993 established goals and dept. Strategies have changed, but goals are dynamic and remain the same. SD staff work closely with depts. and schools to keep aligned. All new initiatives must address training.

*=adms. = administrators dept=department SD=staff development

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Attachment 4: Administrator Agreement with Various Organizational Options for Staff Development

WCPSS's organization for staff training would be more efficient and effective if:								
	Total N= % SA+A	Rank	Cabinet N= % SA+A	Rank	Central N= %SA + A	Rank	Principals N= % SA+A	Rank
Most or all trainers were in one department which coordinated and delivered nearly all district training.	39	5	53	4	18	5	59	5
Professional development functions (e.g., quality, Leadership Development, Staff Development) were organized within one department.	62	2	80	2	47	4	75	2
A staff development office coordinated training for all job groups, but department staff provided the training.	62	3	80	2	57	2	61	3
Responsibility for training of job groups was assigned to individual departments (e.g., teachers to ISD, support to HR).	51	4	20	5	57	2	55	4
All basic technology training (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Windows) was provided through one department.	78	1	93	1	69	1	84	1
All training was aligned with the 95% achievement goal and critical success factors.	73		87		69		75	

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree Note: Other response options were: "don't know, disagree, and strongly disagree".

Staff Development Review Summary
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